



REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS

AT A

MEETING

OF THE

HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY,

HELD AT

THE COMPANY'S HOUSE IN FENCHURCH STREET,

ON WEDNESDAY, MARCH 24TH, 1869,

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

SIR STAFFORD HENRY NORTHCOTE, BART, M.P.,

IN THE CHAIR.

London:

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1869.

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Mar. 24, 1809

REPORT.

At the request of the CHAIRMAN, the SECRETARY read the notice convening the meeting, as follows :—

A GENERAL COURT of the Governor and Company of Adventurers of England trading into Hudson's Bay, will be held at their house in Fenchurch Street, on Wednesday, the 24th instant, at One o'clock precisely, when a proposal by Her Majesty's Government for the transference of the Company's territory, &c., to the dominion of Canada will be considered.

By the 7th George III, cap. 48, no person can be admitted to vote who has not been in possession of stock for six calendar months, unless such stock shall have been acquired by bequest, or by marriage, or by succession to an Intestate's Estate, or by the custom of the City of London, or by any deed of settlement after the death of any person who shall have been entitled for life to the dividends of such stock.

By Order of the Governor and Committee,

(Signed) WM. G. SMITH,
Secretary.

Hudson's Bay House,

London, 16th March, 1869.

Mr. BONAR: I rise to a point of order. As we have been admitted without tickets, have any steps been taken to ascertain whether all the persons present are members of the Company?

Mr. ELEY: Signing the names being no protection.

The CHAIRMAN: Gentlemen, I understand that the practice which has been pursued upon the present occasion is the same as that which has been pursued on other occasions. But, however that may be, I understand that all who have come in, with the exception of the Officers of the Company, have been called upon to sign their names, and, having done so, that will be a *prima facie* test at all events that they are members of the body of Shareholders. If a ballot should be called for, and any vote should be taken otherwise than by show of hands, of course persons coming to vote will have to show who they are, and that they are on the register of Shareholders. In regard to a show of hands, it might happen that there may be persons, I do not think it probable there are many, who are not entitled to vote, and of course if any important question is decided by show of hands, and it is thought desirable to test the opinion of the Shareholders by a more regular process, any seven of the Shareholders can demand a ballot by putting their names in writing. I believe the next thing I ought to do is to call upon the Secretary to read the letter from Sir Frederic Rogers. I would ask whether you wish to have it read? ("No." "Take it as read.") Then, gentlemen, I would say, in the first place, I must correct an error in the notice which has been published convening the Meeting, which, I believe, has attracted the attention of some Shareholders, and which is sufficiently obvious. It is of no real importance, but it is an error. You are told that you are called upon to consider a proposal for the transference of the Company's territory to Canada. Now, that is not accurate.

The proposal is that it should be surrendered to Her Majesty's Government, which is a very different thing, and I must apologise on behalf of the Directors for having inadvertently put the matter in the form in which it appears. I shall proceed, after having made a few observations, to move a resolution, and I think it may be convenient that I should now read the resolution, so that you may have it clearly in your mind what it is we are speaking about. I intend to propose—"That it is expedient to accede to the terms proposed in the communication above referred to, and to surrender to Her Majesty's Government all this Company's territorial rights in Rupert's Land, and in any other part of British North America not comprised in Rupert's Land, Canada, or British Columbia, and that the Governor and Committee be, and are hereby, authorised to make such surrender on being assured that the terms have been agreed to by the Government and Parliament of Canada; provided that the acceptance of the terms by the Government and Parliament of Canada shall have been signified to them by Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies, within six months after the passing of this Resolution, and that for that purpose the Governor and Committee concur in all such measures as may be found necessary for effecting such surrender, and for securing to the Company the rights and reservations to which, by the terms of the letter from Sir Frederic Rogers, this Company will be entitled." Now, gentlemen, I may be allowed, before I call your attention to the correspondence which has been placed in all your hands, to make some general remarks upon its particular points. I wish, in the first place, very earnestly to direct the attention of the Shareholders to the nature of the business they are called upon to do to-day, because there is no doubt that, considering that this correspondence goes back over a period of six years, and that it raises a great many interesting and

important questions, it is no doubt probable that members of this Corporation may be disposed to ask questions, and to make remarks upon various matters arising out of it. Of course we have no wish in any way to check the freedom of discussion, and we shall be perfectly prepared to enter into any discussion into which members of this body may wish to invite us, but the particular point which we are called upon to decide is this, whether we will or will not accept the terms which are offered to us by Lord Granville. I hope, therefore, that the attention of the Meeting will not be diverted from that particular question. One other observation I wish to make. The foundation of this Company's rights rests upon a charter of 200 years old. That charter has been frequently discussed, frequently challenged, and made the subject more than once of parliamentary enquiry, and submitted to legal opinions. The Company have had reason to be satisfied with the results of those enquiries and with the opinions that have been given. But you must bear in mind that it does not follow because opinions have been given in your favour upon this or that particular point that has been raised, you are altogether sure that there is no point which can be urged against you. Now, I wish you would bear in mind that there are two classes of rights which this Company has exercised and continues to exercise under the charter. One is the right to the possession of its land, and the other is the right of governing the country. Now, those two are totally distinct. In regard to its rights to the possession of its land, I think, speaking here, we may say, with great confidence, that those rights and our title under the charter are as good as it is very well possible for a charter to give. I think that we may be satisfied that the opinions of law officers, the decisions of Parliament, and the conduct of Her Majesty's Government upon many occasions and for a long time back, give us every reason to be satisfied that we have a really

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good title to the possession of our land. In saying that, you must remember that when I say our land, it is of course a question what the precise limits of that land are. Those limits have never been actually defined, and although I feel perfectly confident that the extraordinary pretensions put forth by Canada would be utterly futile, we must never conceal from ourselves the fact that the precise limits of our territory have not been defined. Then, in regard to the other question, the right of government, you must remember that the case stands somewhat in this way: that we have, under our charter, a right to exercise such authority in our territories as is necessary for the maintenance of order and for the due carrying on of such business as is required. But, as far as opinions have been given, that right does not give us any exclusive sovereignty over this territory, to the exclusion of Her Majesty's right of sovereignty; and the opinions that have been given expressly say that we have no exclusive right of government, taxation, or other matters of that kind. Therefore, it stands to reason, if that be so, and it has never been decided otherwise, that Her Majesty might, by the exercise of her sovereign power, at any time choose and claim to exercise sovereignty over these territories which have been hitherto left to our administration; and, if she did so, all these rights of sovereignty, rights of taxation, rights of government, and judicial authority would be in the hands of Her Majesty, without derogation to our title to our land; but, at the same time, without our having any right to say that we had an exclusive claim to exercise that authority. Now, I believe that is an accurate description, as far as I can give, of the position in which the Company legally stands. That being so, let me now call your attention for a few moments to the progress of events in the last six years, as they are disclosed in this correspondence. It appears that, six years ago, this Company was reorganized upon a new

basis, for the purpose of continuing to carry on the fur trade, which had been the principal business of the Company in former times, and, at the same time, with a view to the extension of a policy of colonisation and settlement of the territory. That re-organisation, gentlemen, which is the turning point for the present in the history of this Company, took place in the year 1863, and was inaugurated by the issue of a prospectus, of which every Shareholder, of course, is cognisant. And I may mention here, that that step was taken—I believe I am not going too far in saying,—with the sanction and encouragement of the Colonial Minister of the day, the Duke of Newcastle; at all events he was perfectly cognisant of what was going on, and he expressed, in the House of Lords, publicly, his gratification at the step that had been taken, and there is no doubt that those who were originally interested in that reorganisation of which I have spoken, had every reason to believe, and did believe, that they had the hearty and cordial support of the Colonial Office in the matter. Well, they were going to undertake to extend the operations of the Company in a new direction. There had been some little settlement before, but that was of comparatively minor importance. Under the old state of things, while they were carrying on the fur trade, the powers which they possessed of government, as incidental to their possession of the land under the terms of the charter, had been found quite sufficient for the particular purposes that they required. They had found that they were quite able to deal with the Indians, and able to keep order amongst their own servants, and they were quite able to maintain peace and good government in the country as it had stood, and for the purposes for which they used the country. But when they came to consider what would be the effect of an extension of the policy of colonisation, and the introduction into this territory of

large bodies, perhaps it might be of independent settlers, who would be in no way connected with their fur trade, and under no obligations to them, and who would carry with them the traditions and the spirit of Englishmen, and who would require a government, it became obvious that something must be done to strengthen the authority in that country. Now, the promoters of the reorganisation, as I understand, being perfectly cognisant of the distinction to which I have drawn your attention, and recognising the fact that Her Majesty's right of sovereignty still prevailed, and must necessarily continue to prevail if she chose to assume it, hoped and believed that as soon as they had established their Company Her Majesty would exercise that right, and that she would establish such a form of government as might be necessary to give a settled constitution to the colony; and in that hope, as soon as the Company had been formed, they addressed the Duke of Newcastle and asked him to establish a government. I am bound to say—I do not know what influences might have been at work—that, when I look at the answer they received from the Duke of Newcastle, I cannot but imagine that the Directors of the Company must have been disappointed at the mode in which that application was met; because, the first thing the Duke of Newcastle said to them was not, "Gentlemen, you are undertaking a magnificent enterprise which Her Majesty's Government have long desired to see, and to which we wish all success, and we are prepared to co-operate with you in reclaiming all this territory for the British Crown, and peopling it with British settlers, and we are prepared to do what you desire, and to establish a form of government," but the Duke of Newcastle said, "No; before establishing any form of government, I must ask you to give me up your land." Well, that certainly was rather a hard measure for the Colonial Office, as I think, to deal out

to a Company which they had really themselves encouraged to come into existence. However, that answer was given, and thereupon the question arose what the Directors must do. In reply, having argued the matter as well as they could, and finding the Duke was determined upon this, they said, "Very well, if we are to give you our land you must pay for it," and in the first place they asked to be paid a sum of a million sterling. The Duke said what anybody might have expected, he was not likely to get the House of Commons to agree to it; and I must say, as a member of the House of Commons, I think he probably was quite right. Then the Company made another proposal, and they said, "Well, if you won't give us a million of money, give us half the land and take half for yourselves." That, I must say, seemed a very reasonable proposition for them to make, but that was met with an equally decided refusal. The Duke of Newcastle then made a counter proposal of his own, and he said, "If the matter is to be dealt with at all in this way, it must be by your handing me over your land, and my agreeing to give you out of the proceeds of that land, as it comes to be sold, so much per acre—not until you get your million,—but till you get £250,000." That was the proposal which he made, and to the Directors that seemed of course perfectly inadequate. However, they made thereupon a counter proposal, which was calculated to have obtained for them after the lapse of a certain time, if the sales went on as it might be hoped they would do, the sum of a million, of which they had spoken; and there were other points in the proposal. Well, this was under consideration when the Duke of Newcastle died, and he was succeeded by another minister. Then, at that point of time, I think it was that the first communication came from Canada, putting in a claim on their part, disputing the Company's title to a considerable

portion of the territory, and asking the Colonial Office to stay their hand in the matter till they had been heard. The Colonial Office thereupon took up the side of Canada and stayed their hand, and they used their influence with the Directors of the Company, to induce them also to stay their hands until the matter should have been brought in a formal shape before them by the Government of Canada. The Government of Canada it was understood were invited to make proposals, and were supposed to be ready to do so, and it was supposed that very soon there would be a direct dealing between the Government of Canada and the Company, for the transference of the land to Canada. But at this point comes in a new feature. Canada says, "We are now in negotiation for the Confederation of the British North American provinces. We must wait till that Confederation is accomplished. We cannot act alone; we must wait until the Confederated Parliament can act." Then that again was pressed upon the Company by the Colonial Office, and feeling, as they have done throughout, that it was their interest and their duty to conform, as far as possible, to the wishes of Her Majesty's Government, the Directors held their hands for some time, in order to see what would come of this Confederation scheme. Ultimately, as you know, Confederation was passed, and in the Act, which ratifies the Confederation of the British North American dominions, a clause was inserted, giving power to Her Majesty to transfer to the dominion Rupert's Land and other parts of North America upon the address of the Canadian Parliament. That having been done, the Canadian Parliament passed an address to Her Majesty, in December, 1867, praying she would annex these territories to Canada. In that address they stated they should be ready to provide for the proper recognition of the rights of any private company, evidently referring to the Hudson's Bay Company. Upon its receipt, the Colonial

Office sent a copy of the address to the Hudson's Bay Directors, and requested that the Directors would state what terms the Company would ask, with a view to this transference, assuming the basis of the negotiation which had been under discussion with Mr. Cardwell, in the year 1864, namely, a remuneration by being recouped out of prospective sales. You will find the first reply to that letter from Lord Kimberley, I think, in May, 1868; but before any answer was sent, or before anything further was done, it was thought necessary by Her Majesty's Government to pass through Parliament a Bill authorising the Company to surrender, and the Crown to accept the surrender of all lands, rights, and so forth, of the Company in these territories, and then giving the Crown power to accept that surrender, and to transfer the territory to the Canadian dominion on being satisfied with the terms of the address which the Canadian Parliament might pass thereupon. When that Act had become law, the negotiations were resumed, and a further letter was sent by Lord Kimberley in October last, with the terms which the Company suggested, and said they would be ready to submit to the judgment of their Shareholders. Now, that came very nearly at the time when the late Government were going out of office, and almost the last act done by the Duke of Buckingham, as Secretary of State, was to send an answer, dated the 1st December, 1868, which you will find amongst this correspondence, objecting to the terms suggested by Lord Kimberley, and proposing certain counter propositions. When I had the honour of being elected Governor of this Company, I found the matter resting there, and it was at that point that I personally had to take up the negotiations. Well, looking back over all these proceedings, I thought I saw what the whole tenour of the conduct of the Directors had been, and I also wished to

know what had been the views of the Shareholders in the matter. Well, I found that the correspondence had not been laid before the Shareholders, but that in the year 1866 a report very carefully drawn up, and very full, had been submitted to the Shareholders, in which the general views of the Directors had been laid before them, and upon which the opinion of the Shareholders had been taken, by a process which, though it does not amount to a legal vote, was a method of ascertaining the opinions of those who were good enough to send in their opinions. I looked at that report, and I found that the gist of it was this, that the Directors pointed out to the Shareholders that their choice lay between either colonising themselves at considerable risk as they suggested, and at the cost of probably a considerable outlay of capital, and at the cost also of having to direct their energies from the business of the fur trade, or else endeavouring to get Her Majesty's Government in the first place to establish a settled Government; they put to the Shareholders the question, which of those two policies they would prefer, indicating themselves a very strong opinion that it was not desirable for the Company under those circumstances to undertake the task of colonising themselves. In reply to the question they got the opinions not, of course, of all the Shareholders, but of a very considerable proportion of the Shareholders, and they found that a number of Shareholders, representing in the aggregate upwards of one million of stock, gave their opinions against the policy of colonising immediately, whilst a number of Shareholders representing, I think, something like £100,000 worth of stock gave their opinions in the opposite direction. Upwards of one half of the whole stock of the Company was thrown into the scale of not colonising, and they were as ten to one against those who were for colonising. Of those who were neutral we can only say they did not take interest

enough in the matter to throw their weight in the one scale or into the other. Apparently a very decided expression of the opinion of the Shareholders was given, that at that time it was not desirable to go into the policy of colonisation. Well, we found matters were going on in this way, and it had become a question what we were to do. At that moment it was quite obvious there were two policies open to the Company. They might have said, "Very well, the Duke of Buckingham has rejected these proposals, and put forward counter proposals which are inadmissible; we will throw them up and colonise ourselves." Or we might endeavour still to bring the matter to an amicable settlement, and looking to what appeared to have been the consistent policy of the Company—looking to what I believe to be the true interests of the Company—to act in cordial co-operation with Her Majesty's Government, upon whom, after all, we must depend; and looking also, as a member of the House of Commons, as I felt bound to do,—to the mode in which this matter would present itself to the House of Commons if it ever came before it, which it was sure to do,—I thought it was clearly our policy, and I gave my opinions to my brother Directors in that way very strongly, to answer the Colonial Office—to point out the objections to these proposals, and at the same time to make a fresh suggestion, which is contained in the letter, namely, that a simpler method of dealing with the question would be preferable, and that it would be better a sum of money should be paid us for the Company's rights. That led to the proposals which are now before the Meeting. It led, in the first place, to Lord Granville's communicating with the Canadian delegates now in this country. They sent in a long letter, throwing all sorts of dirt upon our title, calumniating us in every possible way, and I cannot say that letter is calculated to produce a very favourable impression. But at the same time, as a matter of business, it does not do to be affronted

with language of this sort. You want to look at the kernel of the matter. Of course we pass it by, as I think Lord Granville intended us to pass it by, as a little bit, perhaps, it may be, of transatlantic style of writing. It is not the style of writing I hope we shall adopt. We passed it by, and we went really to the root of the matter. Now the root of the matter in their proposal was that they said, "It is utterly impossible we can recognise any claim of these gentlemen to anything at all, but if you do wish to buy them off as a troublesome set of individuals who have got possession of your territory, and of whom you want to get rid, but cannot get out without a troublesome lawsuit, you had better compromise, and if you do it at all the utmost we could give would be £106,000, and if they object to take that, we call upon Lord Granville to advise the Queen to transfer all this dominion to Canada, subject to the rights of the Company." Now the Canadians, I have no doubt, knew what they were about when they said that, because it would be perfectly competent for Lord Granville, or for the Crown if it were pleased, to transfer the territory to Canada, subject to the rights of the Company, and the Company might be said to be protected in its rights, but of course we should have some difficulty in dealing with our masters in that case, our rights not having been recognised and established, and we should be subjected to all the incidents which a body handed over to a sovereign power are subject to; that is to say, we should be subject to taxation and everything else, without any power or right on our part to remonstrate. We should have our land, but we should be subject to taxation. Then, that being the case, we replied to Lord Granville, and told him we could not possibly suppose that the Government would commit such an act of injustice as to hand us over without taking security for our rights; and that with regard to this sum of money it was, of course, obviously inadequate. We,

therefore, in reply to a question which Lord Granville asked as to what we proposed to do while the territory was left in our own hands, reverted to the original proposal that we made in the days of Sir Edmund Head and the Duke of Newcastle, to make it a Crown Colony, and we made this amendment:—"We will undertake to recommend the Shareholders to bear the expense of that." Now, if we had had to come to the Shareholders and say—"Gentlemen, we have obtained the consent of the Crown to establish a Crown Colony, and we must ask you to put your hands in your pockets and bear the expense," I do not know how that would have been received. Well, we should have recommended it, and I believe it would not have been at all a bad thing for you to accept. But there was this difficulty, that Lord Granville gave us distinctly to understand that he would not do it, and we knew that the Duke of Newcastle had refused to do it. We knew, moreover, what the sentiments of Mr. Gladstone, in former days, had been upon the subject. We knew, in that Committee of 1857, with which I dare say you are familiar, Mr. Gladstone had moved a resolution which was only defeated by the casting vote of the Chairman, that all that part of the territory which is capable of colonisation should be taken away from the Company, and that the government of it should also be taken away from the Company; we felt we had no means of compelling Lord Granville to grant this which we requested. On the other hand, we should have pressed the matter if he had not come forward as he did and said "I am going to make one last effort to bring you to the point of selling this territory to us, and I think you will find that the terms I shall propose will be for your advantage, or at all events that they will be better for you than what I must propose as an alternative. As an alternative, I must bring the matter before the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, and investigate your title before I decide what other

steps, either legislative, judicial, or executive, I propose to take." That was the condition of affairs, and Lord Granville made this proposal, which I am bound to say, on the part of the whole of the Directors, we are perfectly convinced is a better proposal than either of those that have been made to us by previous Colonial Secretaries. It embraces the payment of a sum down—a considerable sum of money—£300,000; it embraces the reservation to us of all our posts and stations, and of an acreage round them; it embraces also the security for the maintenance of our trade, and so forth, and it provides for the right to obtain, by lot, one twentieth of the lands described in Sir F. Rogers's letter as the fertile belt. Well, when I say that our Directors are unanimously of opinion, which I believe I am justified in saying, that that is better than the terms that were offered by the other Secretaries of State, I am not thereby saying that the Directors consider that they are good terms in themselves, or that they even consider necessarily that they are terms that should be accepted. All I am saying is that we are quite clear they were the best of those that had been proposed, and you had therefore to consider whether you would take those terms or accept the alternative of going before the Judicial Committee. Now, suppose you went before the Judicial Committee. In the first place, it is quite certain that that would take up a good deal of time. A law-suit is by no means an agreeable thing. We looked upon it in this way; supposing you get this territory handed over to you, it would in any case be only what is called an improvable estate. An improvable estate means an estate which is not worth anything until you have laid out a good deal of capital upon it and waited some time for the returns. But it would have been not only an improvable estate, but an improvable estate with a law-suit on it. I shall have to mention to the Shareholders, directly, that there is a law-suit with which we have some familiarity.

Something analogous to this discussion has been going on for twenty-five years, between this country and the United States of America, in regard to claims that we have upon the Oregon Territory, and that is not yet settled, though I hope it is nearly brought to a settlement. That gives one a little horror of these law-suits, because, as I observed, though our title to the land is good, the question—what is that land?—is open to discussion, and you would have an enquiry into its limits, and so forth, which might involve references and all sorts of enquiry, and certainly take up time, and, in the meantime, you would be out of your money, and probably put to a great deal of inconvenience. That is one great objection to that course. Another is, that when you have got your title confirmed, you will be still open to the difficulty that Lord Granville, or the Government of the day, might proceed by some legislative action which you would not foresee, and which might be extremely inconvenient to you. Well, then, I conceive we must ask you to look at this question in a business point of view. We must ask you not to consider whether these terms are satisfactory or not, but whether, under all the circumstances, it is not the best thing for you to accept rather than to refuse them. You will have a considerable advantage from them. Now, with regard to this £300,000, I have heard a remark made upon it. It is said, “True, you will have £300,000, of which the interest may be, perhaps, some £15,000 a-year, but you will bring yourselves under the taxation of Canada, which will tax your imports to the amount of something like £15,000 a-year, and you will gain nothing.” That is, one is to be set off against the other. I am sure business gentlemen, such as those I am addressing, see the fallacy of that argument, because, supposing you did not do it—supposing that you were handed over to Canada, with a reservation of right to your land—supposing it was said, “You

have an absolute title to your land; nobody shall take it from you, but you will, however, be handed over to the sovereignty of this country." You would immediately come under their taxation, and would not get the £300,000. Therefore, you would pay this £15,000 a year, or whatever it might be, but you would not have the interest of £300,000. You would only have your improvable estate, which you would have to improve as best you could, and you would have to improve it under most disadvantageous conditions, because you would be under the rule of a government which would have no interest in assisting you in improving it. They would say, we know, "Gentlemen, we have no interest in this land; it all belongs to you; we cannot lay out roads, cannot do this and that; we have quite enough to do with the government of the country. It costs us a great deal to keep order, to prevent these troubles with America,—extradition to America, or keeping the Indians in order, or this, that, and the other. We have quite enough to do in that way, and we cannot help you to lay out and settle your country." I say we should be in a very disadvantageous position. I do not think you would expect me to come and tell you all the disagreeable things the Canadians might do if we were in that position, because we do not want to put them into their heads, but there is no doubt they might do a great many very inconvenient things. On the other hand, I fully believe, in my own mind, that if we accept this offer we shall have the Government with us; we shall have Canada interested in our prosperity, because we shall be her best subjects, her only profitable subjects, over a large portion of the territory; we shall retain the basis of the fur trade by these posts and stations, connection with the Indians, and so forth, and have a very excellent start in the new country; and, if it developes as it is to be expected it will, by the advance of civilisation,

we shall have an uncommonly fine estate. Here we are told are 160,000,000 of acres of fertile land and so forth, and we are to have one-twentieth. I do not know that all that 160,000,000 of land will come to be sold; if it did you would get your 8,000,000 acres of land in a country which, by the hypothesis, should have been settled for you, with roads and other communications made by the Colonial Government. I do not hesitate to say that that one-twentieth would be more valuable to us under those circumstances than the other nineteen-twentieths would be if we had everything to do for ourselves under all the disadvantages. But that is a matter for yourselves to consider. You are much more familiar with matters of this kind than I am. I have no doubt your judgments will be a great deal better than mine, but I can only say, that, with the most earnest desire to arrive at the truth, and to give you the best advice upon this matter, this is the advice which the Directors have decided to give you. We say, you had better accept these terms, and we will then undertake, as rapidly as possible, to concentrate all our energies upon the development of the fur trade, and accommodate ourselves to the altered state of things. I won't detain—I am afraid I have detained—you very long, but the truth is that a little recompense is due to you for the length of time during which this has necessarily been kept from the knowledge of the Shareholders. It was a matter that it was due to you we should state our views very fully upon, and I can now only add this one observation. The matter has been the subject of very protracted and difficult negotiations with the delegates from Canada. That negotiation has been carried on by Lord Granville, and we have not, till lately, been brought into communication with the delegates at all. They are anxious to return to Canada in the course of next week, for this reason, that the Canadian Parliament meets on the 15th of April, and they are desirous

to submit the proposal to the Canadian Parliament immediately on its assembling. It is therefore important, if we decide upon accepting it, that we should decide quickly. We do not wish to press you in any way to come to a hasty decision if you feel that you are not able to do so, but we press you to come to a very early decision, and it really is of great importance in this matter that the decision should be finally arrived at before the Canadians leave England, at the end of next week. I hope that you may feel yourselves able to day to come to a resolution. At the same time, we do not wish to press you if you require more time and more explanations. We have laid our views as fairly before you as we can, therefore I will only now submit the resolution which I read at the beginning.

A SHAREHOLDER: I wish to ask if the £300,000 includes the whole territory. It is said to be bounded by the Rocky Mountains and certain lakes, but there is a large tract of country, as I apprehend by the map, not included in the fertile belt. It is very indefinite in the first head. It speaks not only of the fertile belt, "all the rights of Government property, &c., in Rupert's Land which are specified" in certain Acts, but "also all similar rights in any other part of British North America not comprised in Rupert's Land, Canada, or British Columbia." Now, if the whole property is to be taken for £300,000, it appears to me that the trade of the Company will be gone altogether, because they might exercise rights over the hunting grounds and every thing else.

The CHAIRMAN: It will, perhaps, be more convenient if honourable Proprietors will put their questions, and then I will answer them at the end, but, if you wish, I can answer this question at once.

Mr. L. W. BONAR: I wish to say, Sir Stafford, that I am entrusted with an amendment to the resolution which you have moved from the chair.

The CHAIRMAN : The motion has not been seconded.

Mr. BRODRICK : I formally second it.

Mr. BONAR : This amendment is the expression of the just and natural surprise and indignation felt by the Shareholders at the imperative notice issued on Saturday last, calling upon us to surrender our vested rights at the bidding of a minister. I am obliged to add that this conduct on the part of the Directors, in endorsing such a summons, is a further betrayal of their trust to us, and I believe we must, as our best policy and our surest safeguard, look to that authoritative decision of the Committee of the Privy Council which is held as a threat over our heads. Without wishing to digress more from the immediate subject than is necessary, it is impossible not to comment in the severest language upon the damaging disclosures contained in the opening part of the correspondence, nor is it possible to avoid protesting in the severest terms against the deliberate and systematic violation which goes through the whole of the correspondence of that condition, that scheme of colonisation proposed by the prospectus, always insisted upon at every meeting of the Shareholders, and which was the express and paramount consideration for which the Directors took £2,000,000 sterling for the sale to us of the land. I ask what was the consideration for which we paid to these Directors £1,000,000 bonus? ("Question") It is the question. I challenge any of the three Directors of the Old Company now on the Board to rise and explain to the Meeting what was the other object for which that bonus was paid. Was it to shift upon our shoulders the decreasing profits and burdens of an exhausted fur trade? Was it owing to a knowledge of coming events concealed from us? Was it a tacit understanding to help Canada with our money to get for nothing that territory which it was not honestly prepared to buy? Or was it one of those

financial operations of the day, by which the money of the Shareholders passed into the pockets of others? Or, again, was it a still simpler operation, that the Directors, having no stake in the Company beyond the qualification to hold office, sought to secure to themselves valuable annuities for life? For whichever of those objects good faith was bartered away, the result to us is the same. Here is a planned inactivity of empty despatch writing, by which the attack on our rights might be made easier, and by which that tribunal, which in 1863 would have protected the active rights of our charter, might be the more easily coerced to act against us. I therefore protest that it is an outrage against established forms, against decency, against common sense, and against our self-respect to call upon us on the notice of three days to entertain the proposals now before us, or to give a reply before we have examined the subject with proper care, so as to see that nothing has escaped the attention or the knowledge of the minister on our behalf—that we should be coerced for the convenience of other persons, or for any other purpose, into giving a decision before our minds are carefully made up. You, Sir, have alluded to Parliament. Coercion will not be tolerated either in Parliament or in this country. Parliament and this country first require of parties who feel aggrieved, that they should evince the spirit and put forth the energy to defend themselves. I therefore call upon this Meeting, not only as Shareholders, but as men, with one voice to support the amendment which is committed to my charge, and which I shall now read—"That this Meeting be adjourned to Thursday, the 6th day of May next, at one o'clock precisely, and that a Committee consisting of"—(names which I shall mention to you—the names of persons whose sentiments have been expressed often in this room)—"Mr. L. N. Bonar, Mr. C. J. Eley, Mr. William Hogg,

“ Mr. Harry Sewell, and Colonel Millington Synge ” (who has surveyed the territory), “ be, and is hereby, appointed for the purpose of conferring with the Governor and Committee with reference to Lord Granville’s proposal dated March 9th, 1869, and that such Shareholders’ Committee be, and is hereby, instructed to forward to the Shareholders their report, previously to the adjourned meeting.”

Mr. ELEY: I beg to second that resolution, and in seconding it my remarks will be very brief, and they will be to the point. I do hope that, as my lungs are not quite so strong, possibly, as those of some gentlemen here, if they happen to differ from me, they will at any rate not attempt to cry me down. In the first place I venture to submit that we have no offer before us for our consideration. We are simply asked by Lord Granville to say that in no event whatever will we ask of Canada more than £300,000. I ask you whether you are so foolish as thus to place yourselves in the power of Canada, and prevent yourselves claiming, at any time, more than £300,000. I ask whether it is likely that Canada will give you even that? and I ask you further, gentlemen, whether that is a position which it is fair for Lord Granville to attempt to place us in? I ask you further, and more especially, whether that is a position which your Directors, as your guardians, ought to wish to place you in? Now, gentlemen, with regard to the £300,000, I beg to say this. I am going to make a passing allusion to a matter not immediately before the meeting: the Directors need not fear that I will digress or take up the time of the meeting beyond half a minute in alluding to a matter that is not actually before them. Gentlemen, you are asked to give up nineteen-twentieths of your territory for a sum of money which is no more than was retained by the International Financial Society for carrying out a financial manipulation, by means of which a sum of no less than

£800,000 was extracted from your pockets and put into the pockets of other people, and for which you have never received one farthing. Now, I promise that I will keep to the point. What are you asked to do? I was not sorry that the Chairman referred to the fact that we should have to pay certain sums of money, in the shape of customs duties on imports into the Hudson's Bay territory. The honourable Chairman has assumed one state of things whereas we assume the contrary. We decline to accept that as our position. What does it amount to? I shall not be contradicted when I say that the value of any given sum of money depends upon the revenue or income you can derive from it. Now, £300,000 at 5 per cent. is, of course, £15,000 a year, and it does not matter, as far as the principle of the thing is concerned, whether you receive £3 per Share and invest it at five per cent., or whether that additional five per cent. is added to the dividend that may be doled out to you; you are virtually offered £15,000 a-year. Now, what will you have to pay? Of course, under present circumstances, while you retain the sovereignty and the fee simple of your property, you do not tax yourselves. Your imports into the Hudson's Bay territory are free. But the moment you transfer your sovereign and territorial rights, your imports will be subject to the custom's dues of Canada. Well, gentlemen, what would you have to pay upon your present trade of £400,000? Why, you would have to pay £20,000. These figures are not mine, they are supplied by the Directors themselves in a letter indited as recently as January—a letter written by Sir Stafford Northcote, on behalf of himself and his Co-Directors, to Lord Granville. Then, what you are asked to do is this: you are asked to receive with one hand £15,000, and to pay with the other £20,000. Gentlemen, that is called "compensation." Now, allow me to put the matter in another light, and I can do so in a very few words. What you are

asked to do is this : you are asked to make a free gift to Canada of nineteen-twentieths of your property, and you are asked to pay, as a privilege for retaining the other twentieth, a penalty of £5,000 a-year. Well, gentlemen, we discovered in 1863 what the meaning of the term "financing" was—we found that out to our cost, to the extent of £800,000—but we have had to wait till to-day to find out the meaning of the word "compensation." All I have to say is this : I should like to know whether the Directors would be willing to treat for the transfer of their own private property upon the same conditions, because, if so, I should like to open an account with them to-morrow, to deal with them to a very large extent. Gentlemen, my impression is that if I was to say, as some ancient did, "I pause for a reply," the instant reply would be "Paws off." We are told that an immediate settlement of this question is necessary to our interest. Gentlemen, an immediate settlement is necessary, but it is far more necessary to the Imperial Government and to the dominion of Canada than it is to ourselves. It is of the utmost importance to the Imperial Government because, as Lord Granville himself admits, as he is forced to admit—if he did not admit it, we, as sensible men, should know it—it is of importance to the Imperial Government for international reasons; and, to prevent the possibility of any contingency arising which might eventuate in war between the United States and England, it is of the utmost importance to the Imperial Government that this question should be settled at once. It is of the utmost importance to Canada that this question should be settled, because, until it is settled, she cannot consolidate her power nor can she develop the resources of the territory which she already possesses. But it is of the less importance to us, because we are in possession. Sir Stafford Northcote has told you, and I am pleased that he has had the candour to tell you—it is not

often, when Chairmen have an object in view, that they will be candid—he has candidly told you that in his opinion your title is clear. Gentlemen, with regard to the validity of your title, bear in mind that it has been called in question over and over again, and has been settled in your favour by the opinions of some of the highest judicial authorities of the country. With regard to our fearing any appeal to the Privy Council, it is the very course that we have been asking Canada and the Imperial Government to adopt for many years past. Gentlemen, the grand difficulty in our way has been this, and the correspondence proves it to you, that Canada, instead of treating with us or with the Imperial Government upon our behalf, as to the terms upon which we should surrender our property, continually, and almost in every despatch, calls in question the validity of our title. If you take my advice, you will certainly rather insist upon than be fearful of an appeal to the Privy Council. Now, gentlemen, I dare say you have been to some extent influenced by articles in the press which have appeared week after week, and day after day. Understand what those articles mean. You must of course understand, or at least the majority of you, that the press of this country, and more especially the Liberal portion, is very anxious indeed to help the Imperial Government to overcome the difficulties they are in, and if you reject this proposal, as I am sure you will do, and if you agree to the appointment of this Committee,—which is proposed, you will remember, not as an investigating Committee, but for the purpose of conferring with the Directors and rendering available for you the very important information which Col. Synge can give you, he having surveyed the country for imperial and military purposes—if you agree to the appointment of the Committee, as I feel sure you will do, you will find that to-morrow, the day after, and the day after, those

articles in the press will be repeated, and they will be continued until the matter is settled. I wish you to understand that, and not to be led away by those articles. Then I have to caution you with regard to another matter. I am not going to be invidious, or to refer to any gentleman by name, or to say a word to lead you to understand who it is that I am referring to, but you must understand that upon our register of Shareholders there are gentlemen who do not and who cannot speak to you in a Shareholder's point of view, who are really the representatives of other parties, who are the agents of Canada in this country. Now I know exactly what is going to be said to you to-day, at least I think so, and I know who it is that will say it. I have no doubt whatever that your fears will be appealed to. Gentlemen, I am not one to say that there is no cause for fear. There is cause for fear, but the cause is from within, not from without. You cannot be despoiled of your property, and your destinies are really in your own hands. There is one other point I wish to refer to, and it is this; many Shareholders—the majority of Shareholders—are apt to look at the quotation of their Shares in the market, and to be guided thereby. Now your Shares are not really at a discount.

A SHAREHOLDER: It looks very much like it.

Mr. ELEY: I am not talking nonsense. You have received no consideration whatever for £8 per Share of the £20 at which your Shares nominally stand, and if you read carefully the correspondence, you will find that the Canadian delegates refer to that creation of extra capital in 1863, in terms of what I consider well-merited sarcasm. You will find, if you read the correspondence carefully, that the Canadian delegates decline to admit your present capital as any basis for the valuation of your property. Gentlemen, had I told you this three or four years ago, possibly you would not have listened to me. I foresaw that whenever the

time came for negotiating with Canada, she would do what we should do, and what all business men would do under similar circumstances, decline to be bound by the fictitious creation of capital which went into other people's pockets, and for which you received no consideration. That she would decline to be bound by that as any basis whatever for the valuation of your property. And, gentlemen, bear this in mind, that whatever loss you incur—and I am not one of those sanguine men who would try to induce you to believe that you will incur no loss—you will do, you must do, but whatever loss you incur, bear this in mind, that it will be due not to any inadequate offer that will be made to you by Canada, or by the Imperial Government on behalf of Canada, but it will be due entirely to the fact that in 1863 a sum of no less than £800,000 was extracted from your pockets, and put into the pockets of other people, for which no consideration whatever, was received. ("Question.") I am not going to say another word upon the matter, but I think it bears upon the question. I admit, however, that it has nothing to do with the intrinsic value of your property. I admit—indeed, I claim that. I admit further, and indeed I insist upon it, that this proposal of Lord Granville, on behalf of the Canadian Government, amounts to spoliation and confiscation. I have addressed you, gentlemen, on former occasions, at considerable length, and, therefore, I will inflict no further remarks upon you. I promised to keep to the point, and I think I have done so. I think, further, that there is the less necessity for addressing to you any lengthened remarks to-day, because I cannot believe it possible that a body of men, such as I see assembled here, can take "a leap in the dark," without further consideration, and without receiving that information which I believe we shall be enabled to give them. I cannot believe it possible that you can so stultify yourselves as not to consent to the

appointment of this Committee, and to some necessary delay in order that you may receive the necessary information. Gentlemen, I conclude by repeating what I said before: you have cause to fear, but the cause is from within, and not from without. You cannot be despoiled against your will; your destinies are in your own hands.

Mr. GERSTENBERG: Gentlemen, I was apprehensive that I should be obliged to detain you for some time, but now a few minutes will suffice, in consequence of the very admirable manner in which the honourable Chairman has condensed the enormous matter before us, and I must thank him for the very truthful way in which he has put the whole case to us. While I support the amendment, that a Committee of Consultation of Shareholders should be appointed to confer with the Directors, I must just briefly observe that I have joined issue with my friends who have proposed that amendment with regard to the affairs of this Company. I have declared heretofore that, during that speculative period of 1863, I went deliberately into the market and took my Shares at a premium of one million. I considered it then, and I consider it now, a perfect bargain to buy a thousand million acres of land for a million pounds sterling. It is the greatest bargain that could possibly be, to buy a country as large as Europe for a million sterling. Why, the City Offices Company paid this for a few square yards! It is the greatest bargain that ever was made! But, gentlemen, I believe that we have great cause of complaint with the Directors for not having carried out the condition upon which that premium was paid. The Directors knew, and the public knew, what was stated in the Blue Book of 1857, to which the Chairman has alluded; and, perhaps, he will permit me to say that that decision of Mr. Gladstone need not frighten us at all, because, if a transfer had been made according to his proposition, compensation would have been

given. Mr. Gladstone has stated, and very truthfully, that property carries duties with it, and if persons do not fulfil those duties, it is natural that the Government should take it away. Now it will appear by the Blue Book that the Canadian Government charge the Hudson's Bay Company that they did not fulfil their duty, which was to colonise and develop the country. A new Company was established, and it was stated to the Duke of Newcastle that ample means were forthcoming, and that the money would be laid out in colonisation and development. ("Question.") Gentlemen, this is a very important thing, and, unless we come to this point, we cannot understand the transactions of the Company. Now I find fault with Sir Edmund Head that, the moment a difficulty was raised with respect to Canada, he at once stated that he wanted to wait until this question was settled—the question of the right of title. The Shareholders pressed the Company to colonise—to do something in order to develop and to establish a certain value. The Duke of Newcastle said, "You have to sell, Canada has to buy. The price to be given is to be determined by what the property is worth to you, and by what it will be worth to Canada." I, individually, urged upon the Directors to establish a value by the development of a portion of the territory, in order that we might say to the Government, "This is our value; we have sold two or three thousand acres at such a price, and, consequently, a million of acres is worth so much." That was urged upon the Directors, and they met it by a proposition to the Shareholders in a way that was contrary to the form prescribed by the charter, that is, they appealed to absent Shareholders. The present Shareholders were all unanimously in favour of our proposition, and the charter says that the members then and there present shall decide, but, contrary to the provision of the charter, an appeal was made to absent Shareholders.

("Question.") Now I will conclude with this observation. The honourable Chairman has given us a very excellent and admirable exposition, but when he came to argue I must candidly confess I was surprised to find him so weak in his argument. It seems that we are to receive £300,000, and pay £20,000 a-year against it. Now, if we remain as we are, certainly we shall be £5,000 a-year better, but then the Government might, without our consent, assign the administration of our property to the Canadian Government, and then they would not do anything in improving the country to make our portion of the property valuable. Now, gentlemen, I believe that could not be the case; because if the British Government transferred the right of dominion to Canada, the British Government would be bound, and the Hudson's Bay Company would take care that it should be bound, to make those improvements for which we are to be disendowed and disestablished. Consequently, I say it with the greatest respect to the Right Honourable Chairman, this really cannot be an argument. The additional argument that the Chairman has used I also candidly confess has made a very disagreeable impression upon me. I am a bondholder of various claims upon governments. Several governments have come before the public and have said, "We make you an offer by way of compromise. We owe you £100, and we offer you £40 or £50 or so;" and a threat has been held out to us, "If you do not accept this, you will get nothing." And another threat has been held out—"If you do not do it at once it will be too late," just as we are told now that the Commissioners are about to proceed to Canada. Gentlemen, I am sorry to say, to my cost, that I have very frequently heard these threats addressed to public meetings, to timid shareholders, and more especially bondholders; and I have always considered that it is by no means right that it should be done; and especially have I thought it wrong that such

threats—such prospects, *in terrorem*—should be held out by the Directors to Shareholders. Therefore I must say, with the utmost respect, that I entirely disagree with that line of policy. The impression on the public mind is this, that the Canadian Government want to rob us of our property. Mr. Gladstone has given an answer: “The Hudson’s Bay Company does not perform its duty, therefore you are right in reality, although you are wrong in theory.” And Lord Granville, than whom a more amiable, just, or upright person does not exist, stated the other day at a meeting of the Colonial Society on the one side, and of the Canadian Government on the other, that he does not know what to do; that he wishes to please both parties, and he only hopes to succeed in displeasing both. That is very natural. Our Directors also are most amiable and highly respectable gentlemen. They see there is some wrong committed somewhere, and that somebody now must pay the piper. Gentlemen, the question is whether there is not another purchaser? Here is a statement made by these parties. They say—“Sir Stafford Northcote claims credit for the Company because they have ‘declined to encourage overtures which have been made to them by private persons for the purchase of portions of the Company’s territory, with a view to their colonisation.’ Our information is (and we can give Earl Granville names and dates, if the point is deemed of any importance), that the only ‘overtures’ of the kind mentioned which the Company have received, were not merely ‘encouraged,’ but suggested and concocted by prominent members of the Company, for the purpose of producing an impression on the Government, and with a view not to colonisation, but to *negotiation* and the Stock Market.” Now, in the first place, Sir Stafford Northcote has stated that they consider it beneath their dignity to take notice of this. I agree that under the circumstances it did not merit an answer, and

it is for the Shareholders not to allow their Directors, or their chief representative to be insulted by these gentlemen. If we are robbed, that is quite enough. ("Time.") I would only detain you a minute longer. I never like to address an unwilling audience: I am sorry to take up your time, but this is an important question. I have nothing more to say, except to conclude by telling you that a *bonâ fide* offer of a million sterling for this property has been made, and why the members of your own Company should not be allowed to make an offer and to take an interest in the matter, I cannot conceive. If I and other Shareholders say, "We want to buy your property for a million, instead of your selling it to Canada for £300,000," I cannot see why these insinuations should be made. As regards myself, although I am a member of the Stock Exchange, I have held fifty Shares in your Company from the beginning, and I have never sold or transferred a single Share; consequently it is not with the view of concocting certificates in the market that I speak. I think you can very easily obtain a million sterling for your property, and I believe that if you appointed that Committee of Consultation, of which I have not been proposed to be a member, the hands of the Directors will be strengthened. I am perfectly convinced of the *bonâ fides* of the Directors: I have the highest regard for their personal character; but it seems to me that they are mistaken in the course they propose. I beg to support the amendment.

Mr. WILLIAM FENTON:—I was very much delighted to hear the seconder of the amendment inform the meeting that our Shares are at par, because when I left Lancaster yesterday they were only ranging from £13 to £14 per Share. Sir, I am extremely sorry that the proposer of the amendment has thought proper to introduce passion and feeling into this discussion to-day, because this is purely a business question. Is it desirable that we should accept this proposal, or shall

we reject it? That is the question we are to decide to-day. Not being able to come to a conclusion upon the matter, I have risen with the object of asking one or two questions which may possibly illustrate the subject. In the 9th Article of the proposal, we are informed that the Company is to be at liberty to carry on its trade without hindrance in its corporate capacity, and no exceptional tax is to be placed on the Company's land trade or servants, nor any import duty on goods introduced by them previous to the surrender. Now, to a great extent, I consider that the whole question turns upon this clause. It has been properly said that if, on the one hand, we are given £15,000 a year, on the other hand £20,000 may be taken from us. I rise to ask this question, whether it is probable that you will get this clause to a certain extent altered? If you think it is possible to exact from the Government, or from the Canadian Government, I do not care which, the condition that our trade may be continued as it is at the present moment? At present, gentlemen, we import goods into our own ports, and through our own ports they get into the country: we bring our furs down the rivers, and at port York, or some other ports, they are dispersed all over the world. On both operations we are at the present moment perfectly free from duty, but I apprehend that if we agree to this proposal, hereafter we shall be taxed and no longer free as at present. You have already, Sir, alluded to this question, and to my mind it is very important. The whole question hinges upon it; and I advert to it again with the view of your giving some further answer, or hoping that you will be able to get the matter put right. Then I wish to ask you another question. I am interested to the extent of £10,000 in the stock of the Company, therefore to me it is an important matter. We know that in Canada the country is defended, or ought to be defended, by means of the Militia. Now, if we agree to this

proposal, will our servants engaged in our business be liable to serve in the Militia of Canada? If they are it would be a great detriment to the operations of the Company, and that is the second question I venture to ask. Gentlemen who read the correspondence which has been put into our hands, will find that we have already paid to Lord Selkirk £80,000 for a portion of the property we possess. Now, I want to know, is that territory for which we have paid £80,000 to be left to us, or is it part of the property which we are to convey to the Canadian Government?

The CHAIRMAN: That is included.

Mr. FENTON: Then there is one other matter, with regard to which I desire to ask a question. What do you propose to do with the £300,000? Is it to remain in the coffers of the Company, to be manipulated by the Directors, in whom I wish to say I have the greatest possible confidence, put out at two or three and a half per cent., as the market rules, or is it to be paid into the pockets of the Shareholders? This is a very important matter, which I hope will have the attention of the Shareholders and the Directors. I have not yet made up my mind whether I shall vote for the amendment or for the proposal of the Directors. As I said before, the whole question, in my mind, turns upon the subject of duty.

Mr. ROBERT BARNETT: I wish to make a few remarks to my brother Shareholders, with all respect to the body of Directors. I am usually in favour of "the powers that be," but I want to know this, whether we, as a Company, having what we believe to be a valid title to a large extent of land, are in that unhappy state in which there is only one customer in the world. I hold myself to be as true-born an Englishman as any man in this room, and I should be sorry to see that large breadth of land in North America given to the American people, but I have yet to

learn that there are not other customers who will come forward and pay us the full value for our property. If we have property that is not worth anything, let us give it away. Very recently we have had it stated, in different papers, that a portion of North America has been sold by the Russians to the United States, and I believe the amount given was 7,000,000 dollars, which represents something like £1,200,000. Now we are offered this small sum, and we are advised by our Directors to accept it. It is not met by a direct negative, which I think it might have been, but these gentlemen have brought forward a temperate amendment, and said "Give us time to determine what we will do." Now, that is such a temperate amendment that I think it behoves us to accept it. Some observations have been made with regard to persons who have come into this room. I, myself, saw a gentleman come here without attempting to sign the paper before entering the room. I do not believe that all the gentlemen in this room are Shareholders of the Hudson's Bay Company. I say the amendment that has been put forward is so temperate, proposing that time should be given to us, that I think we ought to agree to it.

Col. SYNGE: My name has been brought so prominently before you that I trust you will excuse me for saying a few words to the Shareholders. I promise to trespass as little upon your time and attention as possible. I speak to business men. The proceedings of the Meeting have been brought to this point, that it is for you to say at once whether you will decide affirmatively or negatively the question of delay for the purpose of conference with the Directors. There has been much in what has been said by every speaker that has my cordial assent and support, and I think I shall be only giving expression to the unanimous feeling of the Meeting, though it may not be perfectly in order to do so, if I say that your affairs never

would have been in the painful position in which they now are had you been presided over by a gentleman possessing the ability and the straightforwardness of your present Chairman. I have devoted my life, since arriving at the age of manhood, in the effort to open British North America to civilisation and habitation. It is not lightly or without consideration that I come here, at some inconvenience to myself, to address this Meeting, a thing I have never done before, except at rare intervals, in this room or in scientific bodies—speaking on the spur of the moment, to which I am utterly unaccustomed. I entreat you not to be as submissive as a man was once desired to be when his assailant said to him “Arrah be aisy, boy; lie down and let me knock your brains out.” If you do not lie down and deprive yourselves of this property, if you do not take £3 per Share as the value of it. But if you enter as you are bound to do upon the performance of your duties, you do not know what value your property may acquire. A large portion of it, beyond dispute, will prove most valuable if you keep it in your own hands. With regard to the second notice, it did not reach me direct from this house. I was moving, and it was forwarded to me through the post by a friend. I honestly confess that my first impression on reading it was that it must be a hoax, when I looked at the terms of the letter. I am at a loss to express myself with propriety upon such a subject. I must be very stupid (I believe I am in matters of legal arrangement), but it seemed to me quite unintelligible. I could not make head or tail of anything in these articles except that they were “Surrender, surrender, surrender.” I do not understand how anybody could put his name to a document for which he was responsible that would be so unintelligible. I consider that signing a *carte blanche* would be clear in comparison with it, because you do not leave yourselves in the hands of any one person in

whose honesty you have confidence, but you submit to specified terms, which are laid before you as an ultimatum, by which you are bound, and by which you bind those who enter into that agreement with you. I sent a few notes to a friend of mine, who consulted me before I made up my mind to attend this Meeting at all, for I thought it was no use entering upon a forlorn hope, and I confess that after more than twenty-five years' study to accomplish this object, at great personal loss, and never at any personal advantage to myself, I have well nigh given up hope. The object for which I originally entered upon this enterprise is nearly extinct. I am, as I led you to infer from the little sentence that I purposely introduced, of Irish origin. When my fellow-countrymen were starving by millions, when it was said they deserved starvation because they were idle, and drunken, and worthless, by those who professed to be their friends, I was a military officer doing duty in the wild parts of Canada, and I thought "Why on earth should this relief money be wasted uselessly and mischievously when here is territory upon territory unoccupied?" My friends were writing to me upon the subject, and they thought because I was an Irishman, and doing duty in Canada, that I could give these people waste land to occupy. That is the origin of my interest in this question. I say, when I looked through this letter the first thing I saw was "Surrender." The next thing I thought was, "What security is there for the £300,000?" I confess I do not see what the security is. But in looking through the correspondence attentively, I see that the Imperial Government is security. So far, I believe, that is correct, but with regard to the surrender of Columbia, the surrender of Oregon, to which you have particularly alluded, our rights have been surrendered, if I am not misinformed, by the Imperial Government of the United States, and we therefore have a claim upon the Imperial Government, but

we have been unpaid up the present moment. In the same way we have to surrender to Canada, but where is the security for payment within a specified time? Your right of claiming lots will be closed, finally, in fifty years. Everything not open then will be lost to you; but there is no guarantee that anything shall be opened. You have always calculated the value of your property upon average. The country is a stepping stone between the Atlantic and the Pacific. Of course it is necessary and reasonable that there should be convenient posts for transit and communication, and as they have to be supported by the agricultural produce of the country where land is in the most favourable contiguity with the posts, if you secure that you will be doing well; but there is nothing of the sort provided for in these articles. I think you will probably agree that this delay should be granted. The only thing which can be urged against it is that the Chairman has put before you that the Canadian delegates want to go over the water. The Chairman has told you that these gentlemen have been throwing dirt at you without measure. Now, if you are not entitled to your land, you are not honest people in wishing to be paid for it. The people that want to deal with you and say that you have no valid title, say "Oh! we want to go across the water and make quick work of it." It appears to me that when a man wants to pick your pocket, or garotte you (I have never been garotted), or take your property away from you, or do any other grievous bodily harm or personal injury, he will be quick over it and not let the minutes pass. I think, therefore, confining myself to the point of reasonable delay, that I shall have the unanimous support of the Meeting, and I believe the Chairman himself will be most ready to say that this is not an unreasonable thing to suggest. Well, then, I must tell you that I thought when the first notice came that we were only to assemble *pro forma*,

and that the proposal must be met by a negative. I waited with some impatience, and with great interest, until I found what the reasons were upon which we were advised by no less an authority than Sir Stafford Northcote and his Co-Directors to assent to these terms. I have never been in the House of Commons to listen to the debates, but I have often read them with great interest, and I feel that we shall get the approbation and support of the representatives of our country so soon as it is understood that there has been an attempt to force us against our will. I would venture to ask our representatives, and our Chairman, to say this in our behalf, that our delay was only caused by a desire to have more than three days to consider proposals that took the combined wisdom of the Imperial Government by successive administrations of the House of Commons, by endless committees of our Directors, innumerable days to arrive at a conclusion, the effect of which is to deprive us of our property. I confess when I got up this morning, I wished to see what the quotations for lunatics were. You will remember that the privilege of going mad and being supported at the public expense is confined to Irishmen. Now the progress of civilisation has deprived you of a very large source of revenue—the falling off of beavers. They are no longer worn for hats. If you will allow me to end my speech in a homely manner, I would say I think you will be as mad as hatters if you consent to surrender your rights.

Mr. SKINNER: It is evident that an adjournment is absolutely necessary. I need hardly say that I am in the profession of the law, and I dare say many other gentlemen are similarly situated. Any legal gentleman can see that there is a law-suit in every one of these articles. In Article 6, for instance, we are told that we are to take one-twentieth part of the land in the fertile belt. In Article 1 we are told that we are to surrender the fertile land. Now,

what has become of the difference? Are we to be excluded from the difference or take one-twentieth of the whole. Then, passing on to the 7th, it states that the boundaries are to be adjusted to certain points. Those points may, or may not, include more than is now understood by the fertile belt. I have always understood the fertile belt to be about 46,000,000 of acres. You told us in your address that it was to consist of 160,000,000. The hon. gentleman who spoke before me has anticipated some of the observations that I intended to make. It seems to me that we are to be literally bound hand and foot. We can carry on our trade now without taxation, we have all the land now without taxation. Supposing the Canadian Government has the sovereign right transferred to it, surely it would not see it to be its interest to tax us, so as to exclude our land. That would be a suicidal policy. Surely the gentlemen who address that impertinent letter to us would hardly be able to stand up in the Canadian legislature to say that. But there is another most important matter to which I wish to call your attention in the concluding clause of Article 12. After giving those incongruous articles as heads of proposals, it winds up by saying that the details of the arrangement are to be at once settled by mutual agreement. Now, who are the parties who are to make that mutual agreement? The Canadian Government and ourselves? The Colonial Government and ourselves? Or all three? I despair of any mutual agreement with the Canadian Government; I despair of anything being finally concluded with the Canadian Government that is not precisely defined. I, for one, shall cordially support the amendment, and I am willing that my name should be added, if desirable; but I certainly will not vote for any proposals from Lord Granville, or any other party, that do not accurately and precisely define the terms of the surrender. I say, there is a

a law-suit in every article of these terms. Then, the monstrosity of the 6th Article is another matter to be observed upon. It is said that we are "to pay a rateable share of the survey expenses, not exceeding" Now that is a most important matter. The Canadian Government may make the cost of the survey come to more than the fee simple. They may say, "We have been at the expense of a survey. We have had to pay for cattle and for horses, and have been put to a great expense; we cannot let you have this under 10s. an acre." Who is to decide the matter? I say that we are bound hand and foot if we accept these proposals with these important things left in blank. How can men of business consent to it? Then, again, with regard to Article 4, I really think the Directors can scarcely have read the correspondence, in suggesting that, seriously, for our acceptance. I find a proposal, put forward by Sir Edmund Head and other Governors, that we were to have, not a total of 50,000 acres round our settlements, 6,000 acres round each settlement, which would give 300,000 acres. The last speaker says that the land round the settlements is most valuable, and, as we have been at the cost of making that value by putting settlements there, surely we ought to have the advantage of it. I say we ought to have 5,000 acres round each settlement. But, whatever we have, let it be defined. These few observations I have made as briefly as I could. I hope that I have satisfied the meeting that an adjournment is the most reasonable and proper thing. I am extremely obliged to the honourable Chairman for the lucid way in which he has brought the matter before us; but I do not think that his good judgment has been altogether with him when he held out, *in terrorem*, that alternative which I only look upon as a bug-bear.

MR. NEWMARCH: One of the observations that has been

just made would seem to me to be pretty well anticipated by the resolution which you read at the close of your speech. If I did not misunderstand you, what you conveyed to the meeting was, in substance, that the letter of Sir Frederic Rogers, which is in our hands to-day, does not contain the details of a scheme, but the heads of arrangement; therefore, in all the proceedings which have taken place so far, or have to take place, I assume in my own mind that whatever may be indefinite, and there is a great deal that is indefinite in the terms set out by Sir Frederic Rogers, and whatever omissions there may be, will be filled up, as matters of business, before the negotiation can go further. I assume that what we are called upon to determine to-day is, whether or not we will adopt that proposition in principle, whether we will say that we are content or not content to open a negotiation with Her Majesty's Government or the Canadian Government upon the basis of the heads set out in that paper. I beg to repeat the question whether we are willing to open negotiations. ("No, no.") I am perfectly right in my statement: the proposal is that negotiation, with regard to details, shall be opened on the basis of that paper, coupled with the condition that there shall be a payment in money, when we part with our rights, of £300,000. That is the point we have to consider to-day. Now, gentlemen, what is our condition? I am not going back into the history of this case beyond what concerns the business we are to settle now. We are just in this condition: we are in the condition of a corporation possessing certain extensive rights over a very large tract of country, but those rights, whatever may be our own views upon the subject, are called in question by other people—by people on the other side of the Atlantic. Now the question is, whether we are willing to enter into an expensive and protracted law-suit. What the loss of time, and what the expense may be, of such a suit, no human

being can tell. What we have to consider is, whether it is worth while to enter upon this long investigation, the issue of which no human being can undertake to decide beforehand, or is it worth while to take the other alternative. What is the alternative before us? Is the Company to enter into the exercise of sovereign rights and set up a government in that distant country, undertaking the expense of that government and all the other expenses incident to opening up that great territory. It is open to us to do so, but what we have to consider is whether it is expedient; is it worth while to undertake the cost of all these operations? It is true it might be a policy which, some ten or fifteen years hence, might turn out to be exceedingly wise and profitable, and therefore it may be the right course to take. What we have to settle to-day is whether, looking at the case as a whole, looking at the probabilities on the one side and on the other, at the cost and the outlay, and so on, it is worth our while to take the £300,000 in money, coupled with some other very valuable conditions. I quite think that the reservation of land round the ports ought to be larger, but a reservation of three thousand acres is no small matter. But then, there comes the other condition alluded to by the Chairman—we are to have one twentieth part of a very large area—(“Time, time,” and confusion, in the midst of which the remaining sentences of Mr. Newmarch’s speech were lost.)

Mr. SEWELL: It is some time since I have had the honour of addressing the Shareholders of this Company. I do not think that this is a time for mincing. I have but one observation to make, with regard to the last speaker. I will not say behind a man’s back what I will not say before his face. I consider that the last speaker has been speaking in the interests of Canada. He represents Messrs. Glyn. Does Mr. Newmarch come here simply as a Shareholder, or does he come here—I do not say for any unworthy purpose—representing Canada? Sir, in

addressing you, I do not forget that you are for the first time in this chair; but I presume that, representing as you do the Governors who have gone before, you assume, as a Trustee, the same responsibility that they took; therefore, in any remark I make, I merely make it to the Committee as a body. I must express—perhaps I may repeat more or less what has been said before—the extreme surprise with which I received a document announcing, first of all, that a meeting was to be called; six days after that, to receive that voluminous correspondence; and then, three days later, another circular announcing, and giving to Canada the benefit of the announcement, that the Governor was going to propose that you should accept these terms. I was surprised at that exceedingly, for various reasons. I was surprised that the Committee should put forth to us that it was reasonable for us to accept terms only equal to the amount which the Financial Company took for bringing us out, that is, for relieving the old Shareholders of the burden which was then looming up, this question of governing and putting it upon us, charging us the modest sum of £1,500,000 for £500,000 stock. £500,000 was to have been the commission of the Financial Company, but we were told that it was insisted that £200,000 should be returned. I was surprised that the Committee should seem so ready, as I humbly think, to stultify all their correspondence. We have been asking for years a million, which, if what you now tell us is correct, we must consider to be a preposterous sum, because, if you accept £300,000 you have been endeavouring to get an extortionate sum. I hold that the Directors originally considered what they asked right; therefore, if you ask us to take £300,000 now you are giving up the question. For these reasons, I was surprised at the announcement that was made. Let us now look at the proposition. Let us try to make a debtor and creditor account

of it, First, what are we giving up, what are we losing? First of all we lose our territory. Let me remind you that that territory was put forth in the prospectus, less than six years ago, as a great bait for us. The trade was spoken of as worth 4 per cent. But what is a trading Company making 4 per cent? It was the ulterior benefit to which we were to look—a vast territory. I do not want to take up your time by referring to this matter, but I presume you have read the prospectus. Well, you give up that territory and all that it involves, and, secondly, you give up your exclusive trade. What was the opinion of the old Company when they contested for years, even to slaughter and blood, an intrusion upon their absolute trade? Their opinion was that you had better give up the trade if you have not absolute and exclusive trade. ("No.") Then you give up your Oregon question, I apprehend. Well, now, if you are so treated by our own Government, what are we to expect from America? If our whole territory is only worth £300,000 what can we ask from America? Then, lastly, you give up the charter; that which is a bye-word, a name for all permanence and all stability for inviolability on the part of the grantor, and indefeasibility and security on the part of the grantee. Those are the things that you are asked to give up. Well, what do you get? You get £300,000, and you get the privilege of being taxed. Look how it is put by your own Committee—£20,000 a-year on imports. Now, I think the history of Canada is such as to show that she is not the most merciful taxpayer in the world. What is to prevent her raising her tariff? She will squeeze us out; she will not allow an *imperium in imperio*. The tariff will, no doubt, be doubled. What is the history of the past? What is the history of this transaction? Can we have any confidence? Will our property be worth much under the pressure of a government that is trying to filch from us all we have? We

are to get £300,000, or £15,000 a-year, and Canada is to get instantly £20,000 a-year. Then there is another important question: I should like to know whether the factors who are entitled to 40 per cent. of the trade profits, are entitled to their proportion of this money, which would be £120,000? It may be said that they have no rights; are we sure that they have not? Will they sit down to be taxed without trying the question? I am not saying that these are arguments for rejection, though I believe they are, but they are at least arguments for decent delay. How does Canada approach the subject? Why, by disputing our right, and throwing dirt not only at us, but at the British Government. Our charter is 200 years old; it was never forfeited, and has never been disputed, except by our envious neighbours. I say it ought not to be so treated, and I am surprised,—I venture to say it with all respect,—that Lord Granville should take the position he has done. I ask with all respect, and I would ask it were he in the chair, by what right does the Colonial Minister venture upon this topic with us? Is it as an arbitrator? An arbitrator must be impartial. He is not impartial; he cannot be; he would be if he could. He has got two objects; he wants to conciliate Canada, and he holds out the strongest inducement in the world; he wants to avoid a collision with America, that great country which ought to be our ally, and I believe will be, if no errors arise on the part of Canada. Why, in a war with America, £100,000,000 would soon be gone, and they offer to avert that at the price of a single iron-clad. I say that the Imperial Government is bound to give us something. She is bound in her own honour to respect the deeds of a Sovereign. I do not hesitate to say that I would infinitely rather go before the Judicial Committee. I believe that such men as Lord Hatherley, Lord Cairns, and Lord Chief Justice Cockburn will see that right is done, not for us, not

for themselves, but for the honour of England. They will say, "You are not to appear before the nation as a repudiator, as a confiscator, as a tearer up of treaties." It was an imputation against some persons mentioned in the New Testament, that they were disregards of treaties. We talk of repudiation by Spain, and other countries; that, however, is against strangers generally, but here the repudiation and confiscation are by the Government against her own children. I cannot believe it for a moment. I believe if you had Sir Roundell Palmer to advocate this matter you would soon get it set right. I believe that a simple statement of the few facts that I have put before you would carry conviction to any impartial mind, and I say that we are not in the position to accept these terms. One other thing I may be permitted to say. I do not think it is usual in matters of business to be asked whether you will take a given sum until it is offered. I think we ought to have known that Canada would give it. She has all the benefit of this discussion. If there had been any half-heartedness would she not have known it? My name is on the Committee, but I would rather not serve. I simply ask in the interest of the Company, for the credit of the Committee, and for the honour of the English Government, that there should be a decent delay, say six weeks, in order to enable us to look into the question.

MR. WHITE: Mr. Chairman, I assure you that if you have not a representative of the Canadian Government before you, you have a representative of John Bull. My sole desire is, if possible, that we may come to a decision which shall be for the benefit of the Proprietors of the Hudson's Bay Company, and I hope of the country generally. I am not at all surprised to hear the remarks that have been made. When we have our money filched from our pockets in the way this is to be done we must feel warm; and if gentlemen do

express themselves a little warmly, I hope you will forgive them. I must confess there is one gentleman who did speak severely, but I think he did not mean it against those who conduct our affairs. Now I am an old Proprietor of the Hudson's Bay Company, and I tell you most candidly I came into this concern in 1863 because of the respectability of the names. I sold you, gentlemen, property for £300 and I bought it back for £400. Therefore you may suppose that in any remarks I have to make I can have no motive but a desire for the benefit of the Hudson's Bay Company. I am quite sure that our territory contains some of the finest country in the world. Lord Milton told me that there were forty millions of acres just round that spot which you will see marked on the map, as good as any land in Yorkshire, and I said, "We will sell it for a shilling an acre." I must confess that I expected whenever we did part with it that we should get a million. But I think now that is impossible, and I am sorry for it. If I thought there was the least chance of our getting more for it I would stand by you and take my chance, but my firm belief is that there is no such chance. I find that this Meeting must be adjourned; and I would leave it with the Chairman and the Directors to say when it shall be adjourned to. But I wish you would kindly explain to us those two articles—the first and the second. It seems that the Hudson's Bay Company are to surrender to Her Majesty all the rights of government, property, etc., in Rupert's Land, which are specified in the 31st & 32nd Victoria, cap. 105, sec. 4, and also all similar rights in any other parts of British North America not comprised in Rupert's Land, Canada, or British Columbia. The second is that Canada is to pay to the Company £300,000 when Rupert's Land is transferred to the dominion of Canada. I see one of the first geographers in the kingdom here; I have the honour of knowing him, for I have often

met him at the Geographical Society, and I should be glad if he would kindly tell us, for the information of the Proprietors, what part of Rupert's Land Canada is to have, and what part will be left for ourselves.

Mr. MAUNDER: I beg to say, Mr. CHAIRMAN, that as by relinquishing our right to the property we thereby depreciate all the money invested there, which carries with it not merely the amount invested, but also that which is attached to it by the worth of the property, and the various privileges connected with it, I suggest that you would avoid all difficulties with regard to the future settlement; if Canada were to buy the Company in its entirety, you would prevent all after-disputes. She should not only take the telegraphs, but take the stations, the goods in transitu, and all our posts both here and there. This would prevent all after-disputes and litigations, and then Canada could, on her own account, originate a new Society on what conditions she pleased, and no doubt she would be able to raise sufficient money to pay us without difficulty. Thus all disputes would be at an end, and the Society would cease to exist. I have merely thrown out this as the Meeting will evidently be adjourned for the consideration of the Proprietors before they assemble again.

A SHAREHOLDER: Will you tell us before the Meeting is adjourned what proportion the property that we bought from Lord Selkirk for the hard sum of £80,000, bears to the total which we are now going to surrender for £300,000, together with many other things. Perhaps, you will tell us that at the next Adjourned Meeting, and what is the present value of that £80,000 at 5 per cent. interest.

Mr. MAXWELL: I have here a prospectus of the International Financial Society, and I wish to ask the Chairman whether the land named in this prospectus, as being owned by the Company in British Columbia, in Vancouver's Island

and Canada—I wish to know whether that will be included in the £300,000. I think it is a very important question.

The CHAIRMAN: Gentlemen, there are several questions put to me which I will endeavour to answer. The question which was put by the honourable gentleman who has just sat down, has been put, in another shape, by one or two gentlemen previously, that is, what is included in this. Now, you understand that in the first place there is what is called Rupert's Land. Rupert's Land, as a whole, belongs to the Hudson's Bay Company. There is also what is called the North West Territory. That does not belong to the Hudson's Bay Company, and never did, but we have, at present, the right of trading there. We do trade there. Nobody else comes there, or hardly anybody, and practically, as we have stations and posts there, that is in our hands. Now, what is proposed by the terms of Lord Granville's proposal is, that we should surrender to Her Majesty all our possessions in Rupert's Land and all our possessions in what is called the North Western Territory. But we do not surrender anything that we have in Canada or anything in British Columbia, nor do we surrender any claims we have upon the American Government in respect of the Oregon Territory and so forth, or Vancouver's Land. We do not surrender anything there. Well, that is an answer to the honourable gentleman who has just spoken, that we do not give up our claims to ten square miles in Canada, and so forth. All that remains. Now, with regard to Lord Selkirk's property, I think the honourable Shareholder was in error when he spoke of £80,000 in hard cash having been paid. I understand that what was paid was certainly not more than £37,000. What was given, was given in the shape of Shares. I cannot give you the absolute details of the transaction, but it was one that was a transaction between Lord Selkirk and the Company, and that nom-

inal sum of £80,000 was made up, to a great degree, by some question of accumulation of interest in the accounts between the Company and Lord Selkirk. I forget what the precise proportion of Lord Selkirk's territory to the other was. It is included in the Red River Settlement, but some portion of that has been disposed of to other settlers, who are actually located at Fort Gary. Another question has been asked, I think, about the security that we should have for this £300,000. A gentleman, who told us he was a member of the legal profession, said there was a law-suit in every article. I do not know whether we are afraid of law-suits or not, but what you will understand is, that these terms are not put down, nor are you asked to accept them as a legal document. What you are asked to do is to accept these terms as the basis of an arrangement which must ultimately be put into a legal shape. Now, what will have to be done, really, to give legal effect to anything that might be agreed upon, will be this: that the Parliament of Canada must embody, in an address to Her Majesty, the terms upon which they propose Rupert's Land should be added to the dominion of Canada. Those terms will have to be passed through the Parliament of Canada, and submitted to and approved by Her Majesty. We, on the other hand, are not in any way to come into direct communication with Canada, but we deal with Her Majesty's Government, and we are to surrender to Her Majesty's Government, under such terms as we may agree upon with them, and it will be necessary, therefore, that what is done should be done in a legal form; and Her Majesty's Government, in whose honesty, I presume, in spite of what we say about the harshness of their dealing with us, we may, at all events, have perfect confidence, will be the parties to see that the terms are carried out. Now, in regard to security for the £300,000, I am in a position to inform you, though it is not in these papers which are before

you, that Her Majesty's Government intend to guarantee the raising of that £300,000, and therefore the money will certainly be raised on the security of the British Government, and there is no doubt whatever about the money being forthcoming. As regards the possibility of Canada throwing us over in this matter, you will observe that the resolution which is to be put only gives authority to the Directors to carry this arrangement through, provided the matter is accepted by Canada within the next six months, and if in any shape it fell through, it would of course come back to you again. Of course somebody must begin. It is said Canada will be free while we are asked to be bound, but they might say the same on the other side. I believe there is as much reason on the one side as on the other to suppose that there will be objections made to the terms; but the delegates, the Canadian Ministers, have agreed to recommend these terms to their Parliament, and the reason for pressing you to give an early decision before the meeting of the Canadian Parliament, is not for the convenience of the delegates, about which we should think very little indeed, but it is for the purpose of getting the matter brought before the Parliament of Canada at its opening, and not losing the chance of having it brought before Parliament in proper time and shape, and under circumstances likely to secure its reception. I do not say that is to be an overriding consideration. I do not say that if you require more time you ought, on account of that, to hurry yourselves or to try to get the arrangement over. We do not wish to drive you into a corner in the matter at all. I only put before you that you would be more likely, if you are disposed to accept the terms—"No, no."—if you are not, then the whole state of the case is altered. If you were, it would be more likely that you would get the question satisfactorily arranged by dealing with it early than not. And, moreover, while these Canadian gentlemen

are here, it is easy to settle with them the details of the arrangement. It was observed by the honourable and learned gentleman, at the other end of the room, that there was a law-suit in every one of these articles, and, as he said truly, there are a great many blanks to be filled up and things to be defined. Of course, what we ask you to do is to give us authority to deal with these matters, so as to have them clearly defined. And I should tell you that we have already been in informal communication with the delegates, since the receipt of these terms, and have come to a provisional understanding with them upon some of these points. I heard one honourable Shareholder say, "It is cut and dried." May I ask what you expect your Directors to do? Do you expect them to come before you with a practical proposal which they are able to explain, or to throw the whole thing loose before you, and say, "Gentlemen, we cannot give you any guidance in this matter." Of course, if you like to say you have no confidence in the Directors, and should wish to put the whole matter into the hands of other persons, that is perfectly—"No, no."—I do not suppose you do, but if you do not, surely you must allow the Directors to act as men of common sense and business in these matters. Lord Granville gave us these terms, which we agree with you in saying want clearing up and defining, and especially we were to look into this question of the blanks. I was going to tell you what we have done in regard to the blanks. In regard to the blanks in the 6th Article—the amount to be paid in regard to the rateable share of the survey expenses—we propose to fill up that blank with a sum of "eight cents per acre," which was thought a moderate amount. But I am bound also to tell you of another understanding that we have come to with regard to that article, and that is an understanding which we considered it was our duty, in the interests of the Company to

enforce; which was that we should insist that we should reserve our right of making the claim, if we did not think it for our advantage to do so, for ten years after any block was set out, so that it should not be in their power to set out a block and call upon us to make our claim, and then tax our wild lands, which they might do unless other persons came and took their share of the block. That is one thing we have insisted upon, and points there are of that kind which do not affect the basis of the arrangement, but would materially bear upon the details which, if we have your confidence and are allowed to deal with as men of business, we should endeavour to settle before the Canadian Ministers sail. So with regard to the blank in the 4th Article—the size of the blocks in the Red River Territory. We have made out, with the assistance of one of the chief factors here present, an accurate list of all stations which we think we shall require, and the amount of acreage we shall further require around them. We are proposing to agree with the Canadian Delegates as to those precise blocks and the actual amount of land round each of them, so that there may be no disappointment hereafter. There are matters of detail which it is absolutely impossible to discuss at a meeting of the Shareholders; if we attempted to do so it would take from now till twelve o'clock.

A SHAREHOLDER: What is the purpose of these blocks?

The CHAIRMAN: I will explain in a moment. We have, as the Shareholders are aware, certain stations. These stations are of importance to us for carrying on our trade. They are the depôts, the head quarters of our fur trade; and it is necessary not only to have a station with a number of buildings, but you want land about that station, in order to grow corn for your people, in order to pasture your cattle, and to get whatever may be necessary. And you will observe that, although that is the primary object of

retaining blocks; in many cases it may turn out that these blocks may be of value in case of a settlement being formed about these stations. That is an object that we have in view. With regard to another point that was questioned, an honourable Proprietor said he thought that the whole thing turned upon Article 9, and he wished to know whether we could not alter Article 9. Now Article 9, I am free to tell him, has been the one great difficulty we have had all through, and I agree with him that it is an important question, "Can you, or can you not, protect your trade?" Because, supposing, for a moment, you can make satisfactory provision in regard to the trade, it is a very much easier matter to come to a settlement with regard to the land. I heard an observation made just now that, because we have been asking a million all through, and now were recommending you to take £300,000, we must be grossly foolish now, or must have been grossly extortionate then. I beg to observe that that is not at all the true state of the case. In these proposals to the Government, we asked for a million, to be paid by instalment, so much per acre, as it was sold, spreading over fifty years; and I ask anybody whether £300,000 down is not worth a great deal more than a million to be got in that way. Of course it is. With regard to what is really important—our trade—the question is, "What security can you make in order to secure yourselves in the enjoyment of your trade. Now, the Directors have fought very hard all through this to get an agreement that the trade shall not be taxed; that no duties shall be laid upon imports. That it is impossible to get. It is all very well to say "Ah," and that may be a reason with you for rejecting the terms, but let me assure you most solemnly that whatever you get, whatever alteration it were possible to get, you will not get that, because, in the first place, Canada most naturally objects, as any government would,

to say, "We will bind ourselves never to lay import duties upon your particular goods." In the next place the Home Government have always steadily refused to recommend that, therefore you may depend upon it you will not get any pledge of that sort. With regard to how far your trade will be affected, that is another question; you will have, at all events, the security of the Government which is to be established there; you will have their pledge under the authority of the Imperial Government that you shall carry on your trade without let or hindrance, and that you shall not be exceptionally taxed. That is a great point. It is very true that they might wish to raise their tariff from 15 per cent., which it is at present, to 30 per cent. or 50 per cent., but if they do it they must do it for the whole country, and not only will your imports be taxed but other imports also. But bear in mind what is the interest of Canada; the policy of Canada. Canada is competing with the United States. She has great disadvantages in competing with the United States, but she has one advantage which she clings to, that her taxation is lighter than that of the United States, and she, for her own interest, in accordance with her own policy, is pretty sure to keep a low rate of duties. With regard to this taxation, remember two things. In the first place it won't be money altogether thrown away, because you will get something in return for it. You will get the country governed; get it opened for you, and if you do not get Canada to do it you must do it for yourselves. Very well, if you are to do it for yourselves, you may say perhaps you will be able to do it cheaper. I very much doubt whether you would be able to do so. You must not take the expense that the Government has been in quiet times gone by as a measure of the expense which it will be when the country begins to be settled, and the boundary question

arises. You may depend upon it you would be put to heavy expense in governing the country, and you must set this against the other. Then there is another observation which I made in my opening remarks, which is, that it is not the question whether you can choose whether you will or will not be subject to this taxation, because if you are to be under Her Majesty's Government as a Crown Colony, or under Canada as a part of the colony of Canada, whether your rights to your land are or are not affirmed, you will be liable to be subjected to all import duties; and though I am certain that justice will be done by any Judicial Committee, and by the Government, and by Parliament, justice will only demand that you should be confirmed in the right to your own land; but it will not demand that you should be exempted from any customs duties that may be laid upon the country by the Sovereign of the country; therefore, you may depend upon it it is not a question which you have open to you to consider whether you will get out of the taxation if any settled government is established. I think I have spoken upon almost all the points. There was one question asked which it is, I think, premature to inquire, which is "What are we to do with the £300,000 when we get it?" All I can say is, if the matter is settled—if the Shareholders end by taking this, and an agreement is made, of course we shall come forward and make a proposal to them, but I am sure they see it would be premature at the present moment to enter into that. I think I have answered all the questions that were put to me.

A SHAREHOLDER: There is one omitted, that is, whether the factors are entitled to any portion of this £300,000. Some time ago, when a discussion was raised, it was stated that the factors were entitled to 40 per cent., and the question is whether they are entitled to that proportion of any purchase-money.

The CHAIRMAN : The factors are entitled to 40 per cent. of the profits of the fur trade.

A SHAREHOLDER : It has been decided by legal authority that they are entitled to 40 per cent. upon the improved value of this very house.

The CHAIRMAN : This house is part of the fur trade.

A SHAREHOLDER : The question is whether they would be entitled to a similar proportion of the value of the land. I cannot see why they should.

Mr. MAYNARD, Solicitor : The rights of the factors are limited to the 40 per cent. on the profits of the trade. The reason why they were considered to be entitled to that proportion, not of the value of the house itself, but of the increased value of it was, that this house has always been in the balance-sheet of the fur trade, therefore the increase in the value of the house being a part of the fur trade it was considered to be a part of the profits in which they were entitled to participate, but they have no interest whatever in the land, and any increase in the value of the land is a matter in which they have no concern whatever. They can in no case be entitled to any share of the £300,000.

The CHAIRMAN : If there are any more questions to be asked, we shall be glad to answer them.

Mr. ELEY : With reference to the answer given by Mr. Maynard, I wish to ask a question—Whether by any action that we may take in the disposal of our property, whether if in consequence of that customs dues are imposed upon our imports into the Hudson's Bay Territory, and therefore the net profit to which these factors have a claim of 40 per cent. is reduced ; whether in consequence of that the factors would not have an equitable claim, which would be recognised by the Court of Chancery.

Mr. MAYNARD : I have no difficulty whatever in saying that the only profits which they are entitled to participate in

are the profits which this Company, upon their balance-sheet every year, may show to have been produced by carrying on the trade. They have no right to interfere in the mode in which business is conducted, whether duties are paid or not—that is, they must take their chance, as every other trader must. They would only be entitled to participate in the net results, whatever they might be.

A SHAREHOLDER: A question has been asked as to the rights of these factors, and you have been requested to answer it. Now, I state, as a legal man, that any opinion that may be given is purely an opinion, and the only way in which this question can be settled is in a court of law.

The CHAIRMAN: I must observe to the hon. Proprietor that that is not a question, but an observation. I think now we have fairly discussed the matter out, and that there are no more points which we can very profitably discuss. Your time is valuable, and it is important that you should know what course we propose to pursue. I want to know what the feeling of the Meeting is. We cannot be guided altogether by the comparatively few gentlemen in this room who have been able to speak. We have a very large meeting and it would be impossible for every one to speak. Undoubtedly there seems to be a good deal of feeling on the part of many members present that there should be an adjournment. Now I would suggest that if we are to have an adjournment, it should not be for so long a time as that which has been proposed by Mr. Bonar. I think a very much shorter adjournment would really meet the case. If there is a wish to adjourn, I think an adjournment for a week or ten days, or such time as may really be thought necessary for gentlemen to think over what has been said, and to come and confer with the Directors, would be a reasonable thing. I may say, for the Directors, that we are perfectly ready to give any informa-

tion and to answer any questions privately to any of the Shareholders who may wish to come and confer with us. Speaking for myself, I have no desire to be separated from the rest of my colleagues. We have all acted in the most perfect good faith and harmony. They have borne the heat and burden of the day; I have only come in at the end to take the last part in this business that has been going on for many years; but I know I may say this for the Directors, that they will be perfectly ready to discuss the matter with any gentleman who may take an interest in it. I do not think that any advantage would arise, I am bound to say it honestly, from the appointment of a committee such as that proposed, because, after all, it is a very difficult thing to appoint a committee which would entirely represent the feelings of those who ought to be represented. Numbers of questions suggest themselves to the mind of one gentleman or another, and it may or may not be the case that this Committee would put questions which would satisfy each Proprietor. I think the better course would be that all who have questions to put should come to us freely and confer with us. I would suggest to Mr. Bonar, who has made this motion in a very proper spirit, wishing to get plenty of time and not to be driven into a corner, which I quite agree with him it would be a hard thing to press, I suggest to him that he should withdraw his amendment in its present shape and that he should move that the Meeting do now adjourn, and that a day be named to which the adjournment should take place. Then we would agree to that, and undertake to confer with the Shareholders, or any of them who might wish to come to us for that purpose. I will not undertake to propose a day. I should have suggested this day week, or to-morrow week, if it was thought desirable, but I will not attempt to force anything upon the Meeting. I should like to know what is thought

to be a convenient time. My own idea would be that this day week, or to-morrow week, would answer the purpose. I only make that as a suggestion. We all have the same object in view—to do the best we can for the Company.

A SHAREHOLDER: I shall be happy to second that proposal.

MR. ELEY: Mr. Bonar has asked me to reply, as he is suffering from indisposition. Before we came to the determination of proposing the appointment of this Committee, we had several consultations, and the amendment is the result of those consultations. I think the matter is really so serious, that it is of importance that it should be calmly discussed. We shall not meet the Directors in any hostile spirit, but we wish to have time for the consideration of the various matters suggested to us. It will really be quite impossible, within the compass of a week or a fortnight, to do that which we wish to do. The gentlemen who are proposed on this Committee, are well known to you, at least the majority of them. At any rate, we do not wish to withdraw our amendment. We knew very well, of course, how this would be met. We do not blame the Directors for their suggestions, but we are prepared to meet them by saying that we cannot withdraw our amendment. At the same time, if you think for a moment that we are going to indulge in any conduct that will be at all hostile to the Directors, you are much mistaken. Mr. Bonar would not allow himself to be a party to any such proceeding. You will bear in mind that there is a portion of the amendment which gives us instructions to send in our report, and we think it necessary that you should have that report.

A SHAREHOLDER: I beg to express a hope that the recommendation of our Chairman will be attended to, for two reasons. First of all, a committee seems to be perfectly unnecessary. Then, what further information can a com-

mittee obtain, or can this Meeting obtain, than is given in the voluminous correspondence that has been placed before it, added to the very lucid statement from the chair? The Chairman, I am quite sure, has given us all the information that it is in the power of any committee to obtain.

A SHAREHOLDER handed in a request that the 16th bye-law should be read, declaring that no alteration should be made in any of the bye-laws without the consent of two meetings.

Mr. MAYNARD: This is not a proposition to alter a bye-law.

The CHAIRMAN: It is not proposed to do this at a single meeting. It is proposed to have an adjournment—it is only a question of time.

Mr. WHITE: I am very desirous that we should come to some arrangement. I beg to propose an adjournment for a fortnight.

A SHAREHOLDER: I beg to second that.

The CHAIRMAN: It has been proposed that this Meeting be adjourned to Thursday, the 6th of May. To that an amendment has been proposed by Mr. White, that the adjournment be to this day fortnight.

Mr. ELEY: Does this amendment get rid of the appointment of the Committee?

The CHAIRMAN: The appointment of the Committee must clearly form the subject of a separate resolution; that will be put afterwards. The first question is as to the adjournment.

A show of hands was then taken, and the Chairman declared it to be in favour of the adjournment for a fortnight.

The CHAIRMAN: (To Mr. Eley.) Do you propose to move the appointment of a committee?

Mr. ELEY: No; we cannot do our duty and send in a report in a fortnight.

A SHAREHOLDER: I beg to propose the best thanks of the meeting to the Chairman, for the manner in which he has conducted the business of the meeting.

A SHAREHOLDER: I second the proposition.
The Resolution was unanimously agreed to.

The Meeting was adjourned to Wednesday, April 7th.